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MEASURE

Spring 1991

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Beware

Leslie Voltz

If you enter my soul
Beware
It is dark with silence

If you enter my soul
Beware
The corridors run deep and cold

If you enter my soul
Please
Lighten the silent corridors
With the silvery radiance
Of your laughter

If you enter my soul
Please
Warm the deep, cold depths
With the brilliant flash
Of your smile

If you enter my soul
Please...
Don't leave

Inspiration

Robert Garrity

When wind begins its choreography
 To practice on unwilling leaves of green,
 And form a chorus line with plan unseen
Of laundry dancing in a breezy spree,
Then can the mind turn inwardly to see
 The flesh passivity adds to the lean
 And spare design of action's gaunt routine,
Providing subjects rich for form's decree.
 Your love arouses eddies in the air
 Surrounding all the torpor of my ways;
 It stirs inert ambitions into care
 For dancing, singing, joyful, fun-filled days.
So let your stirring love form its design
Upon my sluggish leaves and laundry line.

Memory

Pam Nobbe

Memory is like a shimmering ghost.
 Sometimes it's there
 And you can see it,
 Other times it vanishes
 And eludes you completely.
Memory is like a ghost
 That hauntingly invades your mind
 And takes you back in time
 To the things you'd rather forget.

Walk On The Sky

Mark Heinig

Walk on the sky.
Learn to soar on the wings of a hawk.
Dream the dreams of a leaf that never falls.
Try your luck at this game of no chance
Roll a seven in your world of Fate.

Your tiny face with your huge smile
Stares into the looking glass and sees itself
looking back.
Tattooed on your heart is the future.
See it in your eyes and
Look around at the valley below you.

Walk on the sky.
Don't walk because you can fly.
Use your heart and your wings,
Soar to new heights, but don't forget your yesterdays.

Remember yesterday?
Can you see the forest without any trees?
Can you hear the songless bird singing?
Savor those sands of time and sift through their grains.
They hold the keys to the door that no one has yet opened.
Walk on the sky
And take a look at the valley below you.

Uninvited Love

Kristin Rice

You came into my life
Without an invitation.
You moved right in to live with us--
No cause for celebration.
I already had one of you,
And didn't need another.
But you would love me
And best of all, you would love my mother.
I never knew how much you'd mean,
Or how I'd be so glad
To have you not just for my friend,
But as my second dad.

Something To Be Used

Mark Ciesielski

A wrist is like something you use very much,
Hard as a bone but sensitive to the touch.
That's why it's used so often; it can do it all.
It is the main ingredient to shoot a basketball.
The wrist is loved by ladies, as you would assume,
It's where they scent themselves with perfume.
It's important to a baby, believe it or not,
The wrist is where mom checks if the milk is too hot.
And the wrist can be a killer, not just here but worldwide--
Slit it with a razor blade to commit suicide.

Lingering For S.H.

Christopher Helton

Late at night and I can smell
Your perfume on my arms
Your kisses linger on my lips
Mixing with my dreams
Because you never leave my side

Your eyes linger in my memory
Deep brown which melts and swirls
It's okay It's all right
I just want to kiss you again
I want to forget where I am
I just want someone's touch

Again your perfume comes to me
I think about us talking
You know you are beautiful
I wouldn't lie about that
Something about you lingers
Like a fog after you leave me

When we kissed under the stars
I thought you would taste of
Too many cigarettes but
You tasted like wine
I'm not going to change my mind
Just because of what you've said

I'm not sure now what was real
I hope you were real
And then you look at me again
Your softness chases away doubt
I just want to hold you again

The Last Chosen

Eric Kurutz

I'm the last chosen
You may know me by name
Yeah, that was me last picked
For the baseball game

But that's OK
I don't worry or pout
Just try my best
to hit the ball out

And that's what I did
It didn't take long
I was runnin' the bases
Singin' my song

That's when all the other kids
opened their eyes
To me; I'm the boy who
took 'em by surprise

So don't become discouraged
if you're ever picked last
It's the next life that matters
when this one is passed

"For the last shall be first
in Heaven," God said
Believe, better things await us
As soon as we're dead

Yeah, I'm the last chosen
By now you know my name
I'll be signing autographs
after the game

A Tour Guide's Guide to Saint Joseph's:

Sheryl Fritz

Such a community feeling!
A quality environment...
I love it here.
Never do you hear harsh gossip.
This is a dry campus.

Just one big happy family.
Of course it's worth the price.
Steak and shrimp...
Easy walking distance to hot spots in town...
Pick-N-Save is open 24 hours a day.
Halas costs the same as Justin.
Security guards are always there when you need them.

Caring administration...
Our student body has lots of influence.
Lots of activities to get involved in...
Laundry machines in every dorm...
Everyone is supportive.
Good food...
Education is everything, not who you know.

The Old King Comes

John Groppe

Quiet! Hush, dog! There, stop now.
It's the old King.
See how they growl and cower.
The dogs know he's coming.
You'll soon hear his stick tapping the street stones.
Listen.
There. Hear it?
Come here, dog. Quiet now.
I've seen dogs like that only once.
A sick wolf came to the village
and the dogs were compelled
to drive him off, to attack,
but they could smell his evil
and hung back, growling and cowering,
afraid to do what they had done many times before,
afraid to do what they had been bred to do
long before they were born.
I guess they knew the evil would catch them too
and they'd be driven from the village
to survive only on what they could get
when others feared contamination.
Yes, it's the old king come to feel the civility
he's lost by some god's curse.
We lock our doors and shutters
when the dogs moan and we listen.
Hear him?
He goes to the market and sits in silence
where once he ruled.
It was not his fault. What could he do?
He had been away so long,
how could he know his father or mother?
Some god long before had cursed them all.
Things have not been so bad for us
since he stabbed his eyes
and went off to the caves by the river.
The wheat and olives and grapes are plenty,
and we do leave him some outside the door,
but we burn the baskets in the morning.

I suppose you ought to pity an innocent man,
but you have to protect your family too,
and he should never have come to Thebes.
What had we done that he should seek warmth from our stones
while we hide in the darkness like the dogs?

Crying

Sheila Gemperle

A tight chest, like a rope pulled taut,
constricting more with every heave.

Breath stammering violently between sobs,
gasping for oxygen.

The throat chokes up painfully,
trying to hold back the vulnerable emotion.

A wet sticky face
with salty tears rolling down in streams,
dripping onto the lips and seeping into the mouth.

Bitter, meaningless words come rolling out--
questioning, accusing, hurting.

Looking At The Past

Elisa Lukas

White-feathered clouds mingled with images of my past, consume my mind. I am unsettled. Confused is too trite a word to describe my present feelings. Rather, I am oblivious to reality. I am physically awake, but I am far from being mentally alert. My eyes are open, but the setting is completely unfamiliar. People hover near, but they too are unknown to my conscious psyche. I am alone in a private state of oblivion.

My body continues to rest, but my mind is incapable of any form of concentration or deep meditation. Rather, my mind wanders free through time, as faint pictures of my past flash in my memory. A vibrant, energetic three year-old bounds into my sight. It is me, seventeen years ago. Playing in the yard was always my favorite pastime and today was no exception. Racing across the grass-covered patio, I hurled my body on the ground in some dynamic stunt I undoubtedly assured myself would win me first place in the Olympics some day. It was only a cartwheel, but for an aspiring three year-old gymnast, a cartwheel means everything. My parents, as usual, ran to the window, as I squealed in delight. They applauded as I performed the cartwheel one more time, for their private viewing. They were almost as proud of me as I was of myself. I was strong and flexible for a three-year old. My legs could do anything I commanded. I was constantly wrapping my legs around my head or jumping on a springboard. I never wondered what it would be like to be incapable of these things.

In a split second, the scene changes entirely, as the young three year-old is replaced by the twelve year-old version of myself. I am no longer bouncing playfully in the yard, but rather I am the center of attention in a gymnasium full of people. Dressed in a tiny red team leotard, I mount the four-inch wide balance beam at the state finals. Once again I can feel the energy surge throughout my body and legs. What seems like an eternity passes in two short minutes as my moment of glory fades away. As I dismount from the beam and complete what my parents called a flawless routine, I can feel the muscles in my thighs and calves tighten to support the weight of my landing. My legs have been pumped and worked to insure their strength. I can hear my coach in the background yell, "Run ten laps after practice; let's

get those legs in shape." As always, I followed orders, and my legs grew stronger every day.

The vision of the twelve year-old passes just as quickly as it came. This time, it is not interrupted by another image, but rather a voice. Someone is calling out my name. I sense a tone of desperation in the woman's voice, as she calls out my name relentlessly. I try to respond, but my senses fail me. I am completely incapable of anything. My body and legs are numb.

As the voice continues, I give in to sleep. The sleep, however, is not peaceful, as yet another image from the past enters my mind. The red leotard and slim balance beam have been replaced by boxer shorts and a volleyball. The energy and vigor that once pulsed through my veins is absent. I am lying helplessly on the cold floor. The only sign of life is the stream of tears that is running down my face. A warm hand is extended toward me. I take it easily, but the hand means nothing to me. As I try to stand, the strength in my legs has been drained. The power I had so many times taken for granted was no longer a part of me. Rather, the strength was replaced by a severe pain in my left knee. The mighty gymnast was transformed into a powerless cripple, not to mention a snivelling baby, in a matter of minutes.

Again I hear my name being called in the distance. My eyes flutter open and rest on the clock on the wall. It is 2:30 p.m. -- wait, maybe it is 3:30. I cannot tell for certain. I am unable to focus on anything in the room, let alone the clock. Frustrated and afraid, I close my eyes once more, only to find myself in the gym playing volleyball. As I jump to return the serve, I feel a strong force behind me. My legs cannot support such a severe force. I fall to the ground. In the same instance, I feel a sharp twist reverberate throughout my leg. Fear resides in my stomach as I realize that the twist I felt was not normal. Something happened; I panic!! Something has really happened this time!! Someone help me.

At this instance, my eyes bolt open and I look anxiously around me. The room remains unfamiliar, the faces unknown, the fear undaunted. A petite, young woman hurries towards me, as I look around rather bewildered. She soothes my fears by placing a cloth on my forehead and an icebag on my knee. My knee! Memory returns to a conscious level when I realize for the first time where I am. I am in the hospital. The surgery must be over. The day I kept remembering while I slept was the day I had torn my ligaments. It had been an accident. Someone knocked

me down at the volleyball game. He had helped me up that day; he even apologized. Yet, as I lie here in a semi-conscious state, I realize that his apology means nothing. I look around questioningly as the nurse asks how I feel. I surely can not tell her about my dreams of becoming an Olympic gymnast or the hallucinations I had been having. Surely, I can not tell her how scared I had been, nor can I tell her how relieved I am that the surgery is over. Instead, I merely tell her that my knee hurts.

As I lie in wait for the pain killers to take effect, I reflect on the strange cycle of dreams I had experienced. Years of training and exercise did nothing to prevent the accident. It was a freak event that could not be prevented. That fact, however, did not soothe my discomfort. The fact remains that I will never again do gymnastics or play volleyball or even run a lap for that matter. All of those years I had done gymnastics and nothing like this had ever happened. I took for granted the strength and ability of my legs, but today they lie lifeless, with a slight hint of pain that no pain killer can cure. As I lie in the hospital bed, staring up into the eyes of the young nurse, I wonder just how painful it will be to stand up.

Evolution of Music

Michael Sheehan

The evolution of music slowed
because the mother of a Neanderthal boy
slapped him
for tinkering and creating the first flute
when he was supposed to be
gathering food and digging dung trenches
with his hands.
Instead, he was cutting holes in an
old brown reed.

I've Fallen and I Can't Get Up...

Jen Anderson

My breath is torn from my lungs.
I'm falling from the ladder's rungs.
I know when I land it will hurt.
I will end up face to face with dirt.
Here come people to look and stare
And utter cries of, "She should have taken care."
Some idiot use the phone.
Call an ambulance. Leave me alone!
Stop staring; I feel the pain.
My blood is dripping like unwanted rain.
"Stand back, give her some air," they swear.
I ask, "Are you human; don't you care?"
I silently scream, "Go away, leave me in peace!"
I hear sirens: "Thank God, the police!"

Packed

Kimberlee Dudeck

Packed from top to bottom.
Filled from side to side
With chocolate and butter pecan ice cream.
Only chocolate and butter pecan ice cream.
Just my chocolate and butter pecan ice cream.

Oh, so yummy for my tummy.
But how awful for my thighs.

A nightmare.
Thank goodness -
Exercise.

Disgust

Mark Heinig

Oil matted mallards
Waves of black and blue
Bruisers owned by soldiers
Dreams that don't come true

Sing praises to the Killer--
The killer of the sea
Land will stay the same
But the Gulf shall never be

Biodegradable

Maureen Gemperle

As our explorations take us
Through muddy dark caves,
Slime hangs on the walls like pus.
Unexpectedly our fingers jolt back from the touch of the wall.
An offensive odor creeps and floats,
Encircling our bodies and drifting into our noses.
The smell surpasses that of fungi on long forgotten boats.
Our curiosity has been tempted,
And we look for the source of that rancid smell.
Forward our spell-bound bodies lurch,
Relentlessly breathing in the stale stench
As if it is our life source.
Suddenly, we view a hideous sight.
A dog? No, it is much, much worse.
The disgusting, maggot-infested object
Which lies before our horrified eyes
Is twisted and warped.
A decayed human body rots as it lies.
The stench seems to hover above it
In a visible cloud of disgust.
We try to control our reflex,
But vomit because of this putrescence, we must.

Ignorance

Patricia Emeka

You say you hate me because I'm black.
You have no reason for doing so,
Only that your father did.
He has no reason; only that his father did.
But I have a reason for wanting to know,
And it is because I don't want your children
To grow up with such Ignorance.
I want them to at least have one good reason
For hating my children--
Whether it's because I smell or something like that.
I'd rather that reason than they hate that
Man because he is black.
That is stupid; you can't hate a person for his color.
It's not his fault that he is black,
Just as it is not your fault
For being Ignorant.
You're just afraid, and that is something
We can both overcome through education.
I can't change my color, and even if I could,
I wouldn't.
I'm black and as proud as they come.
No Ignorant low-down snob is going to ever
Make me lose my pride because of his Ignorance.
No white man is going to tell me my color is no good,
While at the same time sitting in the
Sun for hours trying to be like me.
I don't blame him; it's just Ignorance,
and Ignorance can kill,
especially when you don't know it's there.
That's why I want your children to know;
I don't want your Ignorance to kill them too.

Sitting On The Calling Rock In The Smokey Mountains

Pam Nobbe

A feeling of tranquility overcomes me
 As I sit on this rock here in the shade,
 Which reminds me so much of home.
So many years have passed by
 Since I played in the forests as a child.
 Though the legend of the Calling Rock still echoes in
 my mind,
Saying that if you look back at this rock when leaving,
 You'll always return,
 But if you don't, you never will.
And I think of this,
 As I breathe deeply and inhale the fresh, clean air,
 Feeling the wind that blows gently
 And stirs the leaves on the trees.
Listening to the chattering of the squirrels,
I lean my head back and stare at the puffy white clouds,
 Slowly moving with no destination.
Off to my left I can see the path
 That will lead me away, back to reality.
 The sun slowly dissolves behind the horizon,
 Setting off a brilliant array of colors,
Knowing I must soon leave, I jump to the ground.
 Slowly I dust myself off and start down the trail.
Stopping, I look back.

Man's Best Friend

Jen Anderson

A dog looked up quizzically at his master,
He raised an eyebrow,
Then he lay down and went to sleep.

The master went outside his house and
Shouted many demands at the government;
Then he went inside and sat.

The dog, now awake,
Went to his food, and found it had been eaten.
He went to his master and barked.
His master fed him.

The master went outside his house and
Shouted many demands at the government;
Then he went inside and sat.

After eating, the dog went outside.
He could not find his bone.
He left and searched for another.
He lay down, content with his new found bone.

The master went outside his house and
Shouted many demands at the government;
Then he went inside and sat.

The dog found himself locked out of the house.
He shrugged and trotted away.
Behind the garage, he dug himself a hole.
He slept in the hole.

The master went outside his house and
Shouted many demands at the government;
Then he went inside and sat.

The dog was bored. He went to his master.
His master was tired.
The dog went outside, and played by himself.
Later, he lay down, content.

The master went outside his house and
Shouted many demands at the government;
Then he went inside and sat.

The dog looked up quizzically at his master.
He raised an eyebrow
And bit him.

Blackened Beauty

Eric Kurutz

Virgin flake
Fallen from Heaven
Innocent victim
Fallen to Earth
Time's child
Raped
Blackened beauty

The Door

Becky F.

I tried to open the door to your heart,
but I didn't have the key,
so I knocked,
hoping you'd let me in.
I called out to you in my loudest voice,
knowing you would hear me,
and you did,
but you gave me no reply.
I knew I couldn't give you up
as easily as that.
You knew you couldn't expect I'd go away,
so I stood my ground,
and continued to search
for another way around it.

I've found it now,
the opening,
after much deliberation,
and you can't deny me entry one more time.
Your defenses aren't as strong now
as they were that time before,
and you can't force me to leave you here this time.
I love you more than words can say,
although I wish they could,
and I know that I can make you love me back,
just let me into that place in your heart
where I truly want to go,
or I will enter in upon my own.

Why are you so afraid of me
when I've done you no harm?
I only want to see what you can give.
You've denied yourself these feelings
and this happiness so long,
isn't it time you started letting go?
Unlock the door and let me in.
I vow to be the key
to opening unto you other worlds

you never dreamed you'd see.
You need only put that option in my hands.
Open this door before me;
I wish to enter in,
and give away the love you keep inside.

Grandma's Porch Swing

Dianna Maxwell

After Sunday's supper dishes
had been washed and carefully dried,
Grandma would call her grandchildren
and we'd make our way outside.
Sitting in the porch swing
that complained beneath our weight,
She'd begin to sing to us until it got quite late.
Creaking and groaning accompanied her songs.
Old knees and old swing, loudly, singing along.

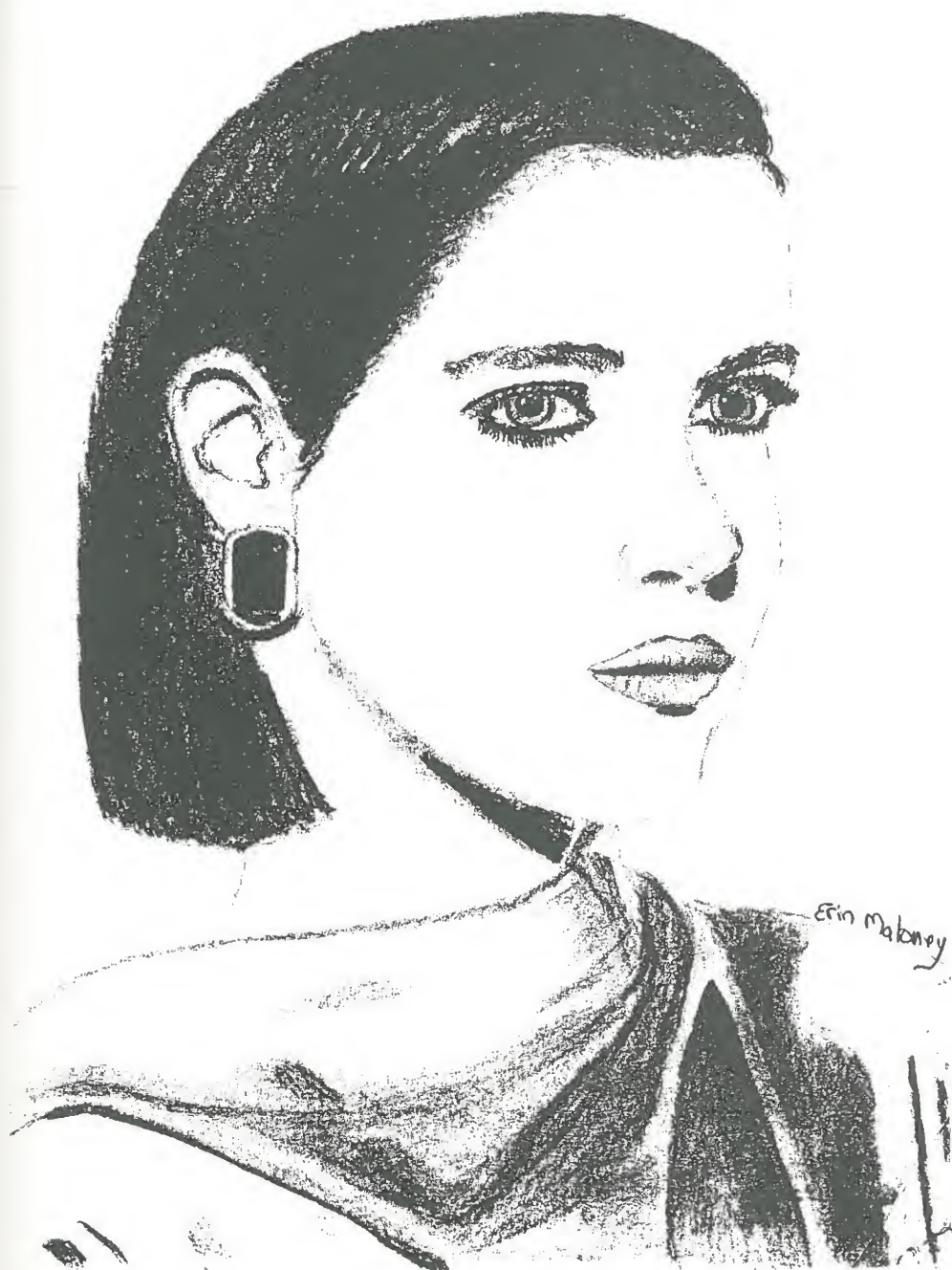
Me

Patricia Emeka

A piece of clay can be molded
Into any shape
A glass jar can easily break
A piece of wood can be cut in two
But none of these can be done to me

My will does not break
You can't mold me into any shape
This is it; this is me
You either take me as I am
Or let me be

I don't need you like a carver
Needs his wood
I can make it on my own
So quit trying to take control
This is my life and only I hold
The key to what I will be



Late Night Pal

Eric Kurutz

Tossin' and turnin',
Awake late at night.
My stomach's making noises;
I think it's time for a bite.

Burned out of energy,
Can't walk down the stairs
Because I just ran a marathon
And flew miles through the air.

So, casually I rolled
Past the TV and chair;
I headed straight for the kitchen
To my pal waiting there.

He satisfies my appetite
With chocolate cake
And pepperoni pizza
That was delivered at eight.

He has bologna, sauerkraut,
Salami and cheese
And leftover tuna
On rye if I please.

And for my vicious thirst,
He has a remedy too,
Whether it's milk, juice, cider
Or a cold Mountain Dew.

But where's that magic spread
That makes every food great?
I found the jar, it said
expires May '88.

And when I've finally eaten
Every last morsel he's got,
I make a dash for the bathroom
And my other pal--the pot.

Cyberflash

Christopher Helton

You feel your
Humanity burn away
As you are replaced
piece by piece
By parts made in Japan

until:

Artificial eyes keep you from seeing
Mechanical legs march you to war
A cybernetic heart keeps you alive
(as long as you do as you are told)

You can feel
The cold steel along your spine
But you are not yourself
Any more

Broken Heart

Becky F.

Teardrops, soft as flower petals,
falling from red-rimmed eyes,
sobs uttered from ruby lips
deep into the night.

The lonely howl of the wind
through an empty, broken heart
that never hopes to mend.

Mascara stains

on a pillowcase:

the black standing out
against the white.

A trembling lip meets the silence
of this place once full of joy,
knowing the laughter is gone now,
maybe forever this time.

The desolation of a soul
beside itself with despair,
willing the body that contains it
to move without resolve.

I know all of these feelings;

I've been there before.

But the world doesn't stop revolving;
it won't even slow down.

After all, what's one more broken heart
and does anybody care?

This World

Emmy Kreilkamp

When you tell me there is no cause to live,
When you tell me there is nothing that is just,
Nothing that is happy, nothing that is right,
I believe you.

When I walk among the people in a crowd,
I notice how they litter the streets,
How they push and shove,
How they avoid eye contact.

I realize what you mean when you say
There is no love in the world -
For if there were -
 Who would suffer?
 Who would kill?
 Who would die?

I long for a world that is filled with peace and love.
A world where love is unconditional
 and trustworthy.
A love so secure and strong that all else is insignifican
But that love is not in this world.

Lessons

Shelly Robertson

There are a couple things you have to know
And try to keep in mind
If you want to see the world around you
Instead of being blind.

There are things you should consider
If you want life to be good.
Yes, there are things we shouldn't do
And there are things we should.

There are certain standards we live by.
But where did they come from?
For many, from experience.
They never do, for some.

But most come from the wise
Who stood and spoke their mind.
Unlike the ones that never learned
These searched and sought to find

Solutions to the problems of
Injustice, conflict, vice.
They left us with their memory
And store of good advice.

"Seize the day," said one
After the sun had set,
In order that we, unlike him
Would not have cause to regret

The things not taken care of
The dreams that never came true...
The promises forsaken
While he "had nothing to do."

Or words of a common fool
Who wanted too much of the best
And ended up with nothing
Then afterwards confessed

To the somewhat dirty crime of greed.
He wished that he had been told
All that looks good may not be,
"What glitters isn't gold."

How about the man who chose to win
And found he could do more?
"A man's reach must exceed his grasp
Or what's a Heaven for?"

Then calling all of this to mind
We find "the world's a stage
And all men merely players..."
As Shakespeare often raged.

And Christ, the wisest of them all
Gave out the golden rule;
The "love one's neighbor as yourself"
That we all learned in school

With "Blessed are the poor in spirit..."
Both these truths because He cared.
He knew that He could help us
Through just these few words shared.

Plus all those others we follow
Without ever thinking twice.
Multitudes and multitudes
Of pertinent, good advice.

Powerful words in times of trouble
Often help us to find
Consolation in times of sorrow...
A little peace of mind.

So in this time of unrest
As we patiently all await peace
Let us take heed of these lessons
That the wars for forever may cease.

A High School Memory

Dana L. Elliott

A yearbook full of photographs,
But just one catches my eye.
Her hair is long and brown.
Why did she have to die?
I can see her in my mind,
As if she were still here.
She was always wearing a purple sweater
And a purple ribbon in her hair.
She was always so happy and proud.
At homecoming she'd wear all purple and gold.
She was in the band and the loudest in the crowd.
Purple violets and a yellow rose,
That's all I can give her today.
She may be a high school memory,
But in my heart and soul she'll always stay.

My Child

Leslie Voltz

The inquisitive sparkle
In your bright blue eyes
Lightens my path.

The sweet, soft kisses
Of your little ruby lips
Brings me joy.

The warmth of your
Chubby arms hugging me close
Gives me strength.

The child-like innocence
Of your uninhibited laughter
Is the lifeblood of my heart,
Bubbling through my body,
Sustaining me, nurturing me,
Giving me life.

Until Tomorrow

Becky F.

I always wanted to hold you
"until tomorrow comes,"
but after each new day,
tomorrow followed.
I used to say I loved you,
again until tomorrow,
but I never seemed to let you go.
I thought it would be easier
to tell you goodbye
with each extra moment that passed,
but try as I might, it never worked out
and tomorrow never came.
So here we are still,
afraid to let go
because we don't know what our futures hold
and want to hold it all back.
Each night before I sleep,
I kiss you and say,
"I love you until tomorrow,"
but I hope that day never comes
because I'm sure I will love you
"until tomorrow"
and ever afterwards.

Prisms

Edward P. Habrowski

(Reflections of a sojourn to and in Malawi.)

Light, light, lights
Shining bright in gay, sparkling, eye-
catching colors
Prisms of hues

Prisms of tints
All shining bright like
six-pointed stars

Bouncing, reflecting, refracting
lines, waves of thought
I scream
Don't hold me in
White light innocent and pure
contained in prisms

But when refracted
White turns into colors
Of the rainbow

Ruby red
Passion purple
Canary yellow
Verdant green
Quiet white
Quiet light
Shining forth

Asking, pleading to be free
In order to show the World and the Word
That light is made to be
Set free and
That light is more powerful
Than a prism of darkness

Grandma

Elisa Lukas

The room was silent. Dismal expressions and tear-stained cheeks surrounded the decrepit figure lying in the corner. A yellow light shone somewhere in the background, providing the room with its only light. The pale-blue walls and gray carpet contributed nothing to the already dull atmosphere of the small corner bedroom. Empty medicine bottles and half-filled containers of water cluttered the dressers and tables. The liquid food she had been taking obviously had spilled, leaving its remnants of chocolate stains on the quaint rocking chair along the opposite wall. The room smelled of orthopedic cream and perspiration, reminding one of the scent of a convalescent home. The air was musty, almost solid in nature. It was hot and humid in there, despite the freezing wind and mounds of snow just beyond the stairway. The cold outside reflected the atmosphere of the room. Hearts were pounding quickly, but nothing could get the circulation of the room going.

The careworn figure lay silent in her bed. No words had passed her lips for days, except the broken utterances of "water" and "bathroom." The family hovered near, almost like seagulls around fish. They hung on every twitch of a muscle or moan of her voice. The family had been there for what seemed like days, but what really elapsed into about two hours. The head of the family, the old woman's son, suffered the most pain, but he tried to remain a pillar of strength for the rest of the clan. His face was hard, almost unbreakable. His usual smile was replaced by a straight edge frown, not recognizable to many people. His eyes resembled the sad puppy dog eyes of an old basset hound that begs his master not to leave. He sat holding her hand, his mother's hand, the hand that was slowly growing cold...

He sat perfectly still, but his eyes followed his daughter who was working systematically next to the bed. It was fortunate to have a nurse in the family, because her training had definitely come in handy these past weeks. She was always taking someone's blood pressure or listening to someone's heart, but this time it was for real. Her face was tense and her lips were parched. Her eyes were clouded by the tears that she attempted to keep locked inside. She struggled with her emotions, trying to

choke back the tears, until finally a single droplet slid down her grave cheek.

Heavy breathing transpired from the lungs of the old woman. Her breath echoed and filled the room, as the entire family waited for each breath to be her last.

"Is she gone?" her father asked with a hint of pain in his voice.

His daughter looked around at the faces of her siblings. Their eyes were set unmovingly upon her. Tears echoed in the background as someone undoubtedly gave into her feelings of desperation. The girl became tense. Was she truly certain of her diagnosis? She undoubtedly questioned her own skills. Her lips quivered and her face grew pale. "Yes," she said above the drowning sound of the reverberating tears, "she's gone."

The room was silent.

A Sunday Afternoon At Natchez In Louisiana

Pamela Gombash

Walking the gravelled path which leads to the house,
I smell the jasmine that grows nearby.
Slowly, I glide across the wrap-around veranda.
I glance at the garden filled with the colors of a rainbow.
The red roses climb the garden trellis.
Blue skies float above holding an amber fireball.
Yellow-eyed daisies sway in the autumn breeze and
Blend with the pink petaled rhododendrons.
Sitting in the wicker rocker, I go to a garden party in 1862.
The guests wander the rolling grounds in the sunshine.
The boys climb the hundred-year old oak,
In search of a tiny tree frog.
At the sound of a whistle from a boat on the river,
I return to the present to find the night upon me.

The Man Who Sold The World

Christopher Helton

I met with him on a mountain high
So we could overlook his new-bought view
This is where we found the darkened sky
This is the place where the people died

We shook hands and signed the deal
Now I'm the man who sold the world
And there isn't a history anymore
Because the future is being rented by the hour

He took me in his private jet
To fly over the American city
From coast to coast and station to station
While he explained to me
The whereas and whys of what he did
And then he laughed loud and hard
Because he owned it all

Then I cried because I was alone
Because I'm the man who sold the world
But I'm the one who owns it too

Love's Garden

Leslie Voltz

I once loved you,
But like a garden
Neglected, unnurtured
Love quickly went to seed,
Lost among the weeds.

I once respected you,
But like fine silver
Neglected, unpolished
Respect quickly tarnished,
Lost among black deeds.

I once desired you,
But with a heart
Neglected, unhappy
Love is gone,
Respect is tarnished,
Desire is lost
Among the weeds.

One More Chance

Maureen Gemperle

The pain in hearts alone reflects my fears.
In frightened hopes of love I hesitate.
For wanting you only creates more tears,
Since dating twice is not our magic fate.

The love I want from you exceeds the rest,
Since love from you would answer silent prayers.
Your caress makes my life the very best,
Together we could dismiss all our cares.

Your eyes remind me of a passion scene,
Every look causes me to lose control.
Strong arms to hold me; this is what I mean.
Don't you realize it's my heart you stole?

Just please respond to my humble pleading
And hold me in your arms once more, lasting.

Laughing With A Sneer

Mark Heinig

Refrigerator, Refrigerator hums all night
While I sneak in and grab a midnight bite.
I munch and munch to no avail,
That damn refrigerator continues to wail.

Hum, hum, hum like a song with no words,
The refrigerator begs me to go ahead and splurge.
Waiting for me, an unsuspecting fool,
I open its door after a hard day at school.
I munch and munch and munch some more.
I munch and munch 'til I drop to the floor.
I crawl to the bathroom to visit the porcelain god,
And all the food I've devoured comes up in chunky brown clods.

There I am, puking like hell,
Getting sicker and sicker just from the smell.
And from the kitchen I can faintly hear
Something like a refrigerator...
 Laughing with a sneer.

Instincts of Grace

John Groppe

The ball came toward me and I bent
slightly and reached without looking,
knowing the glove would meet the ball
just as it bounced,
still knowing that move after thirty-five years,
knowing it, without following the ball
so that I could watch the runner
and throw to my brother at first or Gillen
at second for the double play.
But today there was no runner -- only my son
at bat and me pitching in a far away field.
My brother, Gillen, Kenny, Mahon
and all the rest, I trust, can still make
a sure handed catch and have all
the instincts of grace we learned as boys.

Free Me

Jen Anderson

My shell is still.

My mind can still be sent free to explore.
I dance in the wispy clouds of Heaven.
I walk in the blue sea of forever and always.

-No sense of feeling-

My shell sets my soul to find beauty.
I see a fish swimming in the dark sea,
Guided by God's given light.
I see the dove that carried the olive leaf.

-Controlled-

I will soon be free to swim through time and space,
To move with history at the snail's pace,
To fly through future as the dove.

My shell is shed.

To Derek: Sounds

Leslie Voltz

I awaken in the night
And I listen
For the soft sound
Of you breathing,

For the rustle
Of your bedclothes,

For a dream induced
Mumble of words.

Then I can drift back
To my own dreams
Content that you
Are safe in yours.

Pride

Becky F.

Pride reared its wicked head
and pain befell the lands
and Pride wouldn't let the people see
the destruction they had caused.
Pride brought with it Suffering,
and Pain for the repressed,
but none could stop what
Pride had begun.
Pride brought out the helpless cries
of the persecuted poor
which fell upon the dead ears
of the proud.
The people could not then see
the mistakes that they had made
by letting Pride take over in their lives.
And even now we aren't willing
to see our own mistakes,
not willing to back down
when we are wrong.
Pride has a way of blinding us
to what it makes us do
and uses that advantage, then,
to grow and fight against us,
who are all the while convinced that we are good.

Friday At The Station America

Shelly Robertson

A man stood on the corner
On a city afternoon.
He looked down at his Rolex,
"My bus is leaving soon."

A woman stood by her window
In the early morning light,
And she remembered in ecstasy
The passions of the night.

A child sat in a classroom
But found it hard to learn.
He couldn't ignore the pain
Of his painful, aching burn.

An old man sat upon his porch
And thought that he should see
The world he used to know so well...
The way it used to be.

A soldier saluted rigidly
To try to set an example
Toward the flag that not long after
Some angry fleet would trample.

A cop was killed--a homicide.
A senator lost a debate.
An advisor ignored his kid's question.
A lawyer showed up for trial late.

A student took public speaking.
A speaker forgot what to say.
Deep down, though, he didn't care,
"It doesn't make sense anyway."

A woman aborted her child.
A criminal raped a young girl.
A rich blonde went to her dresser
And asked for one extra curl.

A blind man got robbed in front of a store.
A poor old woman got mugged.
President Bush kissed a newborn.
A wise-ass dealer got slugged.

Some teens attended a concert.
An AA official got drunk.
Three white men killed a Naperville girl
And stuffed her into their trunk.

An immigrant didn't get paid.
A steelworker went out on strike.
A little boy threw some broken glass
At another boy he didn't like.

Hussein spilled some oil in the gulf.
A sky scraper reached a new height.
Many a woman and man out there
Will die for our country tonight.

A salesman made a commercial
To sell people what they won't buy.
A network cut his commercial
So that they could give it a try.

Nature no longer marks seasons.
The moon often shines in the day.
An abundance of bugs and diseases,
And not many bother to pray.

I wonder if things being backward--
Men look like women look like men,
if there's even time
For us to start over again.

An eleven year-old flipped off his teacher,
"Screw you, Babe. I wish you were dead!"
A priest saw a raven perched on a cross
And bowed down his holy head.

Another cop pulled a guy over.
A young man got killed in a race.
A bystander tackled a robber
Who cut him and messed up his face.

And the headlines hold even more news:
Someone will sweat...someone bleeds...
I wonder if man even takes notice
Of the things that he sits down and reads.

Appearances

Jen Anderson

Your eyes are charcoal.
Your skin is beautifully brown.
Your hair is the color of night.

My eyes are like the freshly cut grass.
My skin is the color of freshly fallen snow.
My hair is like the sand on a deserted beach.

We appear to be so different.
I know we feel the same.

All The Madmen

Christopher Helton

Day after day
I stare at my four walls
And no matter what my doctors
Say
Here I stand with foot in hand
Talking with the walrus's apprentice
So tell them that
I can fly and I can scream
I will break my arm
I will do me harm
Just send my friends away
And let me stay in the mansion
Cold and grey

Day after day
I soar about my castle of clouds
Because I want to be
Far away from Love's searing touch
With its explosions of red and violet
In my cold world of grey
All my friends here scream and cry
And they don't want us to feel
Because here with all the madmen
Everything is brittle

Day after day
I am vaguely half asleep
Since God took my logic for a ride
While the sane men stay underground
I would rather stay here
With all the madmen
And I would rather play here
For I am quite content
Rather than to perish with all the sane men



Batter Up!

Jenny Potter

Springtime has finally rolled around.
Time to clear off the base paths and fire up the mound.
The infielders and outfielders are ready to go;
but the first pitch is a ball, outside and low.
The batter anxiously steps up to the plate.
The second pitch is a strike, but the swing too late.
The pitcher and the batter how their eyes do meet.
The batter looks for a hit; the pitcher looks for defeat.
The next two pitches were hurled--one strike and one ball.
"The count is even," the umpire did call.
Now the count is two and two and the tension is high.
The pitcher winds up and lets the fast ball fly.
Now the ball is coming in at a very high speed;
the batter is ready and good connection is at need.
The pitch is high, so the bat is pulled back.
This is not the pitch that this batter would whack.
The pitcher looks to the catcher for the next sign,
and smiles at the batter and says, "You're mine!"
The batter steps up to the plate, the bat held tight,
ready to swing it fast and hit the ball just right.
The pitch was perfect, right at the knee,
the bat was swung, but the call was, "Strike three!"
The pitcher was happy and gave the batter a cocky grin,
but the batter smiled back and said, "I'll meet you again!"

Nature

Leslie Voltz

In early spring
Nature changes her mind
Like a young girl
Deciding what to wear.

The sun shines brightly, briefly
Then Nature hides the sun
Behind a robe of dark winter clouds
Letting it peek out on her whim.

Then she sprinkles
Flakes of snow on our heads,
Sometimes thick flurries,
To remind us of her control.

Next she showers
Us with raindrops, sometimes gently,
Other times harsh and stormy.
The wind showing her power.

Suddenly, it is quiet,
The sun again shining,
But not for long
Because, in early spring
Nature is as fickle as a young girl.

Them

Dale Alan Donaldson

It was a cold day when they came; I remember it distinctly. I had been in the garage working on my baby--a two-tone blue '57 Chevy. Twelve years of work had gone into that car, and now it is gone--all gone. I laugh to myself as I think this, because it reminds me of the commercial for All detergent. You know, the one where the little boy says, "All gone, Mommy!!" Anyway, it was cold out when they came, and I was in my garage, like I said.

They came from the air by the thousands--no, by the millions. It was a sight just to look at them coming in at the speed they were travelling--it was almost blinding. No man-made creation could ever hope to attain the speed that these "beings" had. It was just simply amazing. Along with the wonder that I felt while gawking at them, there was a sense of fear and dread, too. Why were they here? Why now? Why me? All these questions ran through my brain as I watched them get closer and closer, shortening the distance between them and me with each passing second.

And then it happened. At least I think that that is when it happened. Things are very difficult for me to remember now, you see. They had such an effect on my poor human brain that it no longer functions properly. I guess you could say that I am insane. At least I think I am. People say that if you realize you're crazy, then you can't be, but that is a pile of crap. I am crazy, I tell you, and no one or nothing is going to convince me otherwise. Is there anyone left to try to?

You must forgive me for going off on tangents like that, but it is very hard to concentrate when you are in such a state of paranoia as I am. Things are just so different now, I wish that...Anyway, getting back on track, it was a cold day when they came, like I said. The first thing I realized about their arrival was that the sun had completely been blocked out. Although it was only 11:30 in the morning, it was pitch black outside. Well, not pitch black because I caught an occasional glimpse of the sun as they came down.

They were of a blackish green color, the color of fish that has been left out for too long. The smell was the next thing I noticed. They carried with them the scent of "oldness," and the smell of wisdom, if you can understand what I am getting at. I

could tell that their kind had been around for eons longer than the human race, and they carried the knowledge of times long past. I was completely overcome by the idea of this, and it intrigued me to no end. As curious as I was, I refused to make any move to or away from the spot I occupied just outside the open garage door. As if I could've moved if I had wanted to; I was riveted to the spot.

A silent buzzing noise that had been audible since their appearance ceased. I held my breath, knowing that something awful was about to take place, and it did. They devoured my baby. Every part of it was gone--from the hard canvas top to the rubber on the tires. I almost had a nervous breakdown, but I went crazy instead. A lot of people have pity for us insane people, but it's actually kind of fun to be half-whacked. Here I go on another tangent again. Damn it all...

After they had completed their Chevrolet smorgasbord, they came after me. I felt myself being carried away by these creatures, and the thrill of the flight was so great that my system couldn't handle the pressure, and I guess I passed out.

When I woke up, I found myself in a metal cage of sorts, hanging from a very high place. Miles below me I could make out what appeared to be a desert one moment, and the next I was hanging from a street lamp on a deserted New York City street. On one of these occasions I caught some napkins flying in the wind, which I am writing on now.

I don't know what is to become of me. I rarely see my abductors, and I have yet to see another human face. Every place I find myself I am always in my cage, in a deserted part of the world, with no life at all--except for them. They feed me on a regular basis, so obviously they want me alive, but for what I don't know. That is a different chapter altogether. I just can't forget how they just came out of the air.